

Dear Senator Birkholz and Representative Palsrok,

As a cottage owner lucky enough to have had a front-row seat on Lake Michigan since 1972, I strongly support the DEQ's recommendation to allow the provisions for beach maintenance and vegetation removal under Act 14 of 2003 to sunset. Over 34 years, we have watched the lake rise high enough to take out our stairs and then fall enough to give us a volleyball beach. Our kids used to dive off the timber jetties our neighbors put into the lake to protect their beach. All those expensive barriers did was erode everyone's beach. Now they are long buried under the sand, but they will resurface one day when the water level rises again.

My point is what every Lake Michigan lover knows: that majestic blessing of water will do what it's going to do. And just as we humans have ruined so much of the environment with our short-term wants, we want to mow our beaches and rearrange our dunes and fill in wetlands because we think that's prettier now and who cares about tomorrow when the water levels rise again! And just as the water jetties damaged everyone's property, whatever one beach owner does to the vegetation on his beach affects neighboring beaches for hundreds of yard.

The DEQ makes a simple and necessary request to protect all the shoreline of our great Great Lakes state. Cancel the letter from the DEQ Director that now permits wanton removal of beach vegetation and replace it with a simple application form that provides environmental oversight. With a 30-60 day turn-around time on the permits, no beach owner is going to be held up if his beach-cleaning plan does not threaten the fragile ecology of the Great Lakes.

Those of us lucky enough to live in Michigan recognize the Lakes as our state's greatest environmental gift. And we also know that when we humans interfere with Mother Nature and the Great Lakes' own heartbeat, we risk losing it all. As a grandmother and beach owner, I don't think that's fair for my family to come.

Susan B. Lovell  
3505 Hidden Lake SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546  
8405 Olive Shores West Olive, MI

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan B. Lovell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name and address.

CC: Representative Gerald VanWoerkom